

REMARKS

Claims 1, 2, 14, 19, 27, and 34 have been amended. Applicants reserve the right to pursue the original claims and other claims in this and other applications.

Claims 1-4, 8, 10, 11, 14-17, 19-21, 23, 25, 27, 28, 30, 32, and 34 stand rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,635,621 (“Atkinson”) in view of U.S. Patent No. 4,543,044 (“Simmons”). This rejection is respectfully traversed.

Claim 1 has been amended to recite “first and second pumps, each of said first and second pumps, each of said first and second pumps comprises a pump conduit connectable to the surgical instrument by way of output valves, wherein the pump conduits are connected by way of suction conduits and suction valves to a common suction conduit that is connectable to the source by way of the releasable coupling.” Support for this amendment can be found at least on page 6, lines 18 to 21 (paragraph [0021]) and FIGS. 1, 3, and 5 of the original specification. Due to the advantageous combination of a common suction conduit that is connectable to the source by way of a releasable coupling and the advantageous output valves, a small number of conduits is necessary for two or more pumps.

The Atkinson and Simmons combination does not teach or suggest this limitation, or otherwise render claim 1 obvious. Atkinson does not teach or suggest first and second pumps, which are connected by pump conduits to a surgical instrument, wherein the pump conduits are connected by way of suction conduits and suction valves to a single common suction conduit that can be connected to a source by a releasable coupling. Furthermore, Simmons discusses a large number of different pump conduits, wherein the pump conduits that are connectable to the surgical instrument are not connected to suction conduits and suction valves to a common suction conduit that can be connected to a source by way of a releasable coupling.

Since the Atkinson and Simmons combination does not teach or suggest all of the limitations of claim 1, claim 1 is not obvious over the cited combination. Claims 2, 14, 19, 27, and 34 contain limitations similar to those of claim 1 and are allowable at least for the same reasons discussed

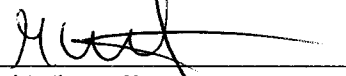
above with regard to claim 1. Claims 3, 4, 8, 10, 11, 15-17, 20, 21, 23, 25, 28, 30, 32, and 34 depend from claims 1, 2, 14, 19, and 27 and are patentable at least for the reasons mentioned above. Applicants respectfully requests that the rejection be withdrawn and the claims allowed.

In view of the above, Applicants believe the pending application is in condition for allowance.

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Respectfully submitted,

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